

Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR) Position Statement: Early Literacy

The Connecticut Association for Reading Research (CARR) joins with the International Reading Association in believing "... that achieving high standards of literacy for every child in the U.S. is a shared responsibility of schools, early childhood programs, families, and communities." (International Reading Association and National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1998) Learning to read and write is fundamental to the success of each learner while in school and later in life as the skills needed grow increasingly complex and include various types of electronic communication that reaches beyond the borders of the United States to all corners of the globe.

Literacy development starts in the home and can be strengthened by educators fostering a relationship with parents and caregivers that can include providing information and resources. Early literacy growth is optimized with instructional and assessment practices that result from teacher knowledge, mentored classroom experiences and in-depth professional development (PD) necessary for expert application in the classroom.

All students arrive with considerable diversity in their reading and writing abilities, therefore no one method can be endorsed for all students. It is the work of each educator to make decisions that are based on pedagogy and research that determines which strategies and methods are effective. In order to insure quality literacy instruction for all students in preschool through grade three, the following criteria are essential:

Instruction

- Using an integrated semantic (meaning), syntactic, and grapho-phonetic (visual) instructional framework
- Providing shared reading and writing experiences, including reading aloud, repeated readings, and creating interactive experiences with books and writing texts
- Attending to high-frequency, non-decodable words through word study to learn how words work and providing instruction about how to deconstruct words in authentic text
- *Including explicit teaching of comprehension skills and strategies using authentic text, including development of background knowledge and connection to prior experience*
- *Offering opportunities to read, discuss, and write about texts representing a variety of genres, including electronic texts*
- *Providing for broad and sustained, in-class reading and writing tasks that address fiction and non-fiction topics*
- *Developing word consciousness to support vocabulary growth through direct instruction*
- Requiring students to edit and revise written responses to text with the goal of increasing clarity of expression for varying audiences and varying purposes
- Providing opportunities for students to discuss texts in small and large groups to share ideas and clarify understanding

Assessment

- Using running records to document growth and analyze strengths and weaknesses in development (reflects the integrated instructional framework)
- Administering writing prompts related to in-class topics that are scored to document growth
- Providing time for both oral and silent reading that is accompanied by checks for understanding
- Using a portfolio of assessments that provide formal and informal outcomes and anecdotal (observed) evidence of strengths and weaknesses related to Connecticut Core Standards benchmarks; reliance on several assessments to provide a valid and holistic picture of each child's progress

Professional Development and Resources

- Providing all classrooms with a library that contains texts representing a variety of reading levels and topics that appeal to young children including a representation of the various cultures within the community
- Scheduling data meetings that allow for sustained, ongoing, collaborative analysis of individual, class, and grade level strengths and weaknesses
- Creating a culture where professional learning is a priority by structuring time for Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) to meet and discuss the curriculum, instruction, and assessments
- Ensuring that the lowest progress students receive individualized instruction provided by the most highly qualified literacy professionals
- Share information with parents, caregivers, and the community that can promote reading behaviors and habits that develop lifelong readers and writers and lead to the enjoyment that comes with pleasure reading
- Timely provision for all of the above

These basic criteria are compatible with and support the Connecticut Core Standards and their related assessments.

Resource Cited:

International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1998). *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children*. Retrieved from <http://www.reading.org/General/AboutIRA/PositionStatements/DevelopmentallyAppropriatePosition.aspx>